

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the first paragraph on p. 8 of the Specification as follows:

--A first end of the optical path 11 is coupled to a headend node 21 (or more simply a headend) which includes a scheduler 22. In some embodiments, the scheduler 22 includes a control message processor 221 and a scheduler timer processor 223. The control message processor 221 may include a scheduler authorization message (SAM) processor 225. A first end of the optical path 11 terminates at the scheduler 22 in the headend 21 and a second end of the optical path 11 terminates at a termination 23, also included in the headend 21.--